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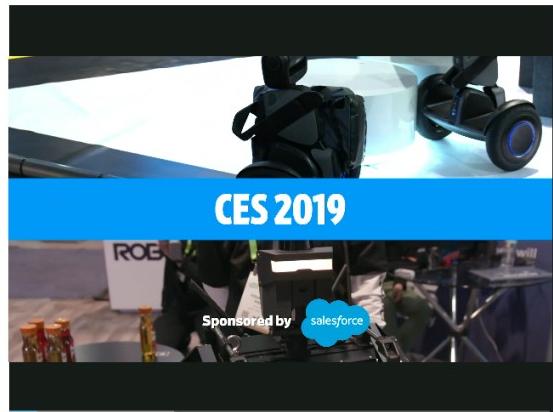
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AT&T'S 5G STUNT IS DECRIED AS 'MISLEADING & A MARKETING PLOY'

Still, at CES, AT&T Communications CEO John Donovan stood his ground



By George P. Sledo. Published on January 11, 2019.



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On the eve of the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, AT&T updated its phones to replace the LTE symbol commonly found atop of its consumer's mobile screens with "5Ge," a misleading suggestion that its phones are ready for the fifth generation of mobile tech.

AT&T Communications CEO John Donovan conceded the phones aren't capable of 5G speeds at CES, saying the move was made to "ready" consumers about the forthcoming switch to the fifth generation of mobile tech, something most experts believe won't be deployed at scale for at least another two years.

"AT&T is apparently now saying that it has 5Ge network, but I think it is a misleading and a marketing ploy to get out in front of the competition," says Victoria Petrock, an analyst at eMarketer. "We have no 5G phones yet; we have seen prototypes on the showroom floor, but if there is no 5G phone, I don't understand how AT&T can be running a 5G network."

5G technology, when it arrives, could bring speeds of 10 gigabits per second, or roughly speeds that are 200 to 300 times faster than

At CES, AT&T's Donovan remained defiant.

"I have now occupied beachfront real estate in my competitor's head, and that makes me smile," Donovan said on stage. "Every company is guilty in building a narrative in how they want the world to work and I love the fact we broke our industries narrative two days ago. They're frustrated."

Donovan added: "Everyone that competes with us didn't like the idea that last night the top of our phones now show 5Ge in all of the 400 markets where we have advanced our network, readying it for 5G. We felt like we had to give them an indicator that said your speed is twice what it was with 4G and I think the result of 5Ge has our competitors frustrated."

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AT&T isn't the only company attempting to plant a flag. Although consumers can't purchase any 5G phones, Samsung did have one on display at CES.

The Korean tech giant was showcasing a 5G prototype this week, but it didn't (and couldn't) show off 5G speeds, which are roughly 200 times faster than what's currently available in the market.

Petrock adds that it's important to not just think about mobile when it comes to the fifth generation of mobile technology. "5G will power much more than mobile phones," she says. "It will help with the internet of things as well."

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